



THE SOUTH TEXAS REGIONAL COCORAHS NEWSLETTER

NWS
Corpus
Christi



Fall 2009 Edition

Welcome Message

by Juan Alanis

It is with great pleasure and excitement to introduce everyone to our new twice yearly Co-CoRaHS newsletter for the Corpus Christi, Victoria, and Laredo region.

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep all observers and residents across our region informed and up to date about the latest news and happenings in the Co-CoRaHS program.

The CoCoRaHS program is truly a team effort at all levels. From the staff at the national CoCoRaHS headquarters in Colorado to all the state, regional and local coordinators across the nation and of course, the most impor-

tant people of all, our dedicated observers! It is because of the true dedication of our observers that the CoCoRaHS program has been such a huge success across Texas and the nation.

CoCoRaHS is now in 47 states and will add Arizona and Delaware to the program by the end of the year. Canadian and Mexican residents in regions bordering the United States will now also be able to sign up as observers. CoCoRaHS hopes to achieve its goal of 20,000 observers by 2010!

Once again, a big thank you to all our dedicated observers and CoCoRaHS



The 4-inch rain gauge required to participate in the program

staff and coordinators. It is because of you, that CoCoRaHS is such a huge success!

How are CoCoRaHS and the National Weather Service associated with each other?

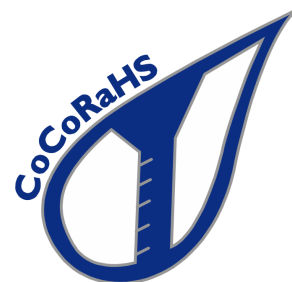
by Tony Merriman

"If I observe my rainfall in Texas, why does my data get sent to Colorado?" This is a very good question that I have received from many of the great CoCoRaHS observers in South Texas. For many years, each

National Weather Service Forecast Office had its own localized rainfall network. Unfortunately, access to these rainfall amounts were difficult to obtain from one weather forecast office (WFO) to another, primarily be-

cause each WFO issued a different product for their respective rainfall networks. There was a need for standardization. The CoCoRaHS network provided a great avenue for standardization.

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How are CoCoRaHS and the National Weather Service associated with each other? (Cont.)

"In the years since (1998), CoCoRaHS expanded rapidly with over 15,000 observers in 47 states."



The CoCoRaHS network originated with the Colorado Climate Center at Colorado State University in 1998 due in part to the Fort Collins flood a year prior. In the years since, CoCoRaHS expanded rapidly with over 15,000 observers in 47 states. This national reach and subsequent standardization has proven to be very beneficial for the National Weather Service. Not

only does it alleviate the administrative burden of maintaining a local network, but it also allows the regional coordinators to focus on the needs of the observers.

The partnering of the National Weather Service and CoCoRaHS creates a more efficient system of collecting rainfall amounts and distributing rainfall data on a national scale while maintaining a

local presence in South Texas at the National Weather Service - Corpus Christi Forecast Office.



How CoCoRaHS assists with the ongoing drought

by Tony Merriman

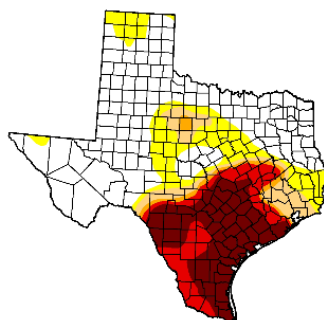
U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

August 18, 2009
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	49.9	50.1	35.3	28.9	26.7	18.1
Last Week (08/11/2009 map)	50.0	50.0	34.1	28.9	26.6	16.8
3 Months Ago (05/26/2009 map)	32.9	67.1	47.8	31.6	17.4	6.7
Start of Calendar Year (01/06/2009 map)	41.7	58.3	24.5	15.0	9.1	4.2
Start of Water Year (10/07/2008 map)	67.2	32.8	20.5	11.0	3.6	0.0
One Year Ago (08/19/2008 map)	31.7	68.3	40.6	21.6	7.3	0.0

Intensity:

D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Drought - Extreme
D1 Drought - Moderate	D4 Drought - Exceptional
D2 Drought - Severe	



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



Released Thursday, August 20, 2009

Author: Laura Edwards, Western Regional Climate Center

The U.S. Drought Monitor is updated on a weekly basis with the final product issued every Thursday. The Texas drought map can be found at the following URL: http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/DM_state.htm?TX,S

Environmental scientists who generate the U.S. Drought Monitor Product utilize various precipitation sources and drought indices to produce the final national drought map. Among these precipitation sources are the rainfall data collected from the CoCoRaHS network.

It is extremely important for observers to report when it does not rain (0.00") as much as it is for observers to report when it does rain. The zero precipitation amounts assist the Drought Monitor authors by giving them more confidence in assessing

drought intensity. If zeros were not reported, then the precipitation values for those days would be assumed to be missing and confidence in the drought intensity would not be as high.

I really appreciate seeing many observers across South Texas already reporting zero rainfall amounts when it does not rain. You are all providing valuable observations key to accurately monitoring the drought conditions across the region. Keep up the great work!



Caring for your rain gauge

by Juan Alanis

It has been a dry summer across much of the region. As a result, most of our rain gauges are probably collecting more dust and bugs than rain drops. It is very important, however, that we take a few minutes to clean out our gauges. Dirt and bugs can build up inside the cylinder and start affecting your readings. In humid areas, algae can also grow in

your gauge.

To keep your gauge in great shape, pour some warm water and some gentle liquid hand soap in the small tube and let it soak for a few minutes. Next, twist a thin soft towel and spin it into your small cylinder until it reaches the bottom. Rotate the towel to wipe all the dirt off the bottom. This can be done on a monthly basis and it only

takes a few minutes.

Please note that the large cylinder should also be cleaned regularly.

CoCoRaHS does not recommend using a firm bottle brush. It is also not recommended to place your gauge in the dishwasher. These methods may eventually begin to scuff/scratch and haze the inside of your gauge.



Proper maintenance of your rain gauge ensures accurate rainfall measurements.

Meet the Webb County CoCoRaHS Coordinator

by Juan Alanis



Juan Alanis, Jr., Webb County CoCoRaHS Coordinator has been involved with the weather since high school. During his time at United High School in Laredo, he was a weather observer for KGNS-TV meteorologist Richard Berler,

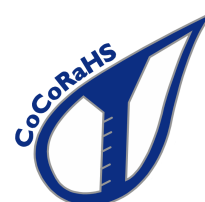
wrote a weather column for the high school newspaper as well as produced the weather segment for the school's daily news broadcast.

During his college years in Austin, Juan continued as a weather observer, for KTBC-TV meteorologist Troy Kimmel and became a trained SKYWARN severe storm spotter.

Juan graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in May 2000 with a degree in Radio-TV-Film, and is now seeking a Masters Degree in Educational Administration from Texas A & M International University in Laredo. He has been a teacher with the United Independent School District for the past eight years and has had a meteorol-

ogy column for the LAREDOS, a monthly newspaper since 2005. Juan also had brief stints as a broadcast meteorologist in 2000 and 2004 at KVTX CBS 13 in Laredo.

Juan became a rainfall observer for the National Weather Service in July 2007 and became the Webb County CoCoRaHS Coordinator in October 2007, helping the NWS promote and expand the CoCoRaHS program in the Laredo area from three original observers to the current 26.





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National Weather Service Mission Statement:

The National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community.

Brief National Weather Service History:

The National Weather Service has its beginnings in the early history of the United States. Weather has always been important to the citizenry of this country, and this was especially true during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The beginning of the National Weather Service we know today started on February 9th, 1870, when President Ulysses S. Grant signed a joint resolution of Congress authorizing the Secretary of War to establish a national weather service.

ON THE WEB!

<http://www.weather.gov/corpuschristi>

Meet the South Texas Regional CoCoRaHS Coordinator

by Tony Merriman



Tony Merriman is the South Texas CoCoRaHS regional coordinator and is also a general forecaster at the National Weather Service – Corpus Christi Forecast Office. He is originally from northern Indiana where he became interested in weather at age 5 when a tornado passed a few miles north of his house.

Tony attended college at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. During his time in college, he was an intern at WKJG-TV (now WISE-TV) in Fort Wayne and worked at the Northern Indiana National Weather Service Forecast Office. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography with a concentration in Atmospheric Science and a Minor in Mathematics.

Tony joined the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Corpus Christi in 2004 three months before the historic Christmas Eve snow event. He was an intern for a year and a half and was then promoted to a general forecaster in 2006. He became the South Texas CoCoRaHS regional coordinator during the summer of 2007 and now oversees 160+ observers within the region.

